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UNCLAS ANKARA 005713

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: TURKEY PLANS TO ATTEND PARIS PACT CONSULTATIVE
GROUP MEETING - OCTOBER 12-13, VIENNA

REF: STATE: 204638

1. (SBU) Summary: The GOT plans to send an Ambassador-level, interagency delegation to the Paris Pact consultative meeting in Vienna, however, the GOT is not receptive to the idea of being the focus of or hosting one of the upcoming expert-level meetings. End Summary.

2. (U) Econoff delivered reftel demarche to Murat Ates, Head of Department of International Political Organizations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on September 27 and further discussed the issue on October 4. According to Ates, the GOT's delegation to the Vienna meeting will most likely include: Turkey's Ambassador to the UNODC, Mr. Aydin Sahinbas; Mr. Murat Ates; Director of the Turkish International Academy Against Drugs and Organized Crime (TADOC), Mr. Celal Bodur; and the Deputy Director General of the Turkish Customs Undersecretariat.

3. (SBU) Though the GOT will participate in the upcoming consultative meeting, Ates said the Turkish Authorities prefer not to be a region of focus nor a host for next year's cycle of meetings. Ates laid out three reasons for the GOT's resistance: 1) The GOT, in conjunction with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) recently hosted a conference in Istanbul which focused on similar topics and hosting another such conference in Turkey would seem redundant and counter-productive; 2) The GOT believes that those countries which host roundtables such as the one UNODC is proposing, are usually countries that are failing in their attempts to combat drug-trafficking--the GOT does not want to be perceived in this way; and 3) From a political perspective, the GOT feels strongly that if Turkey were to be the focus of an expert-level meeting, Turkey would become a target for criticism.

4. (SBU) Comment: Econoff reiterated that the intended purpose of the expert-level meeting would be to highlight Turkey's best practices and efforts in disrupting trafficking routes through the region and participants at the meeting would focus on learning from Turkey's successful endeavors in combating drug trafficking. In light of this, Ates told Econoff that he would consult with Turkish Authorities again and ask if they would consider hosting an expert-level meeting. Ates made it clear, however, that the GOT would not be willing to serve as the focus of a meeting. If the GOT agreed to host a meeting, Ates said that it would not be possible to hold one this year. Ates also said that these matters would be discussed further at the Vienna consultative meeting. Econoff requested that Ates inform the USG if Turkish Authorities changed their minds about hosting or about serving as the focus of one of the upcoming expert-level meetings. It may be useful for the U.S. delegation to contact the GOT delegation in Vienna before the meetings begin.

EDELMAN